

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER K. JARVI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,  
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL  
RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 1388, TO AMEND THE NATIONAL TRAILS  
SYSTEM ACT TO DESIGNATE THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER TRAIL IN THE  
STATES OF MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AS A  
NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.**

**May 15, 2007**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 1388, a bill to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Star-Spangled Banner Trail as a National Historic Trail.

The Department supports H.R. 1388 with three amendments.

H.R. 1388 would designate an approximately 290-mile land and water trail extending from Tangier Island in Virginia, through southern Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia within the Chesapeake Bay, Patuxent River, Potomac River and north to the Patapsco River and Baltimore, Maryland. The land routes would follow existing public roads, along which British and American troops traveled. The bill would require the Secretary to encourage public participation and consult with landowners, as well as Federal, State, and local agencies on the administration of the trail. The bill would prohibit land or interest in land outside the exterior boundaries of any federally administered area from being acquired for the trail without the consent of the owner. Finally, the Secretary would be authorized to provide interpretive programs and services, and technical assistance to State and local governments and non-profit organizations.

In 1999, the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail Study Act (Public Law 106-135) was enacted authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to study the potential route of a Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. The history, background, integrity, and national significance of the trail were researched and analyzed. The criteria for national trails, set forth in the National Trails Systems Act, were applied, and five of the eight trail study segments were found to meet the necessary criteria. The proposed 290-mile trail would only include these five segments.

Providing conservation and enjoyment of, public access to, and interpretation of the historic route and its resources has been a growing focus of both public and private initiatives in recent years as the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 approaches. In Maryland, a grassroots initiative was undertaken to raise public awareness of the important events that occurred in the Chesapeake region in the summer of 1814 during the War of 1812. Historians and regional groups recognized the untold stories and legacy of the events of the Chesapeake Campaign and the need for protection and interpretation of related historical resources.

The proposed National Historic Trail would commemorate the events leading up to the writing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” during the Chesapeake Campaign of the War of 1812. These events include the British invasion of Maryland, the Battle of Bladensburg, the burning of the White House and the Capitol, the burning of the Washington Navy Yard, and the Battle for Baltimore in the summer of 1814. The route of the invasion is known and documented, and the proposed trail would follow it as closely as practical.

The War of 1812 and the Chesapeake Campaign of 1814 had long-lasting and far-reaching effects on the United States and American culture. It represented the first major test of our infant democracy, contributed to the formation of a national identity, and demonstrated the importance of

a strong military and the need for coastal defenses. During the campaign, other events occurred that are significant to our nation's heritage, particularly the writing of the poem commemorating a key battle -- the Battle for Baltimore. Francis Scott Key's poem, the words of which comprise our National Anthem, celebrated the resiliency of the young nation and the flag he described as "The Star-Spangled Banner" during the successful defense of Fort McHenry. The events provide important testimony, too, about the roles of the enslaved and civilians in the early defense of the nation.

Should H.R. 1388 be enacted, the National Park Service would prepare a comprehensive management plan, in consultation with Federal agencies, State and local governments and private organizations, and with widespread public participation, to identify the goals and objectives for trail preservation, research, interpretation, public use, trail marking, and cooperative management. The bill recognizes the advantages offered by the regional nature of the trail and the many organizations interested in and associated with the history of the Chesapeake Campaign. Several key trail-related resources, such as Fort McHenry and the White House, are owned by the Federal government. We anticipate that other trail-related resources such as structures within Old Town Alexandria in Virginia or Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in Maryland will remain in local or private ownership.

In addition, an early step after establishment would be the appointment of a federal advisory council, as stipulated under section 5(d) of the National Trails System Act. The Secretary shall consult with such a council from time to time with respect to matters relating to the trail, including the selection of right-of-way, standards for the erection and maintenance of markers along the trail, and the administration of the trail.

The proposed trail represents an opportunity for an effective partnership among Federal, State, and local governments, a dedicated trail organization, and the many public and private site managers to administer and maintain a federally designated commemorative trail along the historic routes of the Chesapeake Campaign. Because of its emphasis on partnerships, this approach provides the greatest flexibility for resource protection while creating a framework for interpretation and visitor experience. The cost associated with implementation of the comprehensive management plan could be shared by relevant State and local governments and private organizations, which generally helps to limit Federal expenditures for national trails.

The Department recommends three amendments to the bill. First, during the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail was the 25<sup>th</sup> national trail to be designated as part of the National Trails System so this bill would need to be amended to make it the 26<sup>th</sup> national trail. Second, the trail description should more accurately reflect that the trail would begin at Tangier Island and encompass water routes through the Chesapeake Bay and the Patuxent, Potomac, and Patapsco Rivers. Third, the bill is drafted with the Secretary providing interpretive programs and services, and Fort McHenry providing technical assistance only. We wish to clarify that Fort McHenry would be authorized, based on the availability of funds, to provide interpretive programs and services as well as technical assistance.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks and I would be happy to respond to any questions that you and the committee may have.

## **Proposed Amendment to H.R. 1388, Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail Act**

On p. 2, line 5, strike “(25)” and insert “(26)”.

On p. 2, delete lines 7-12, and insert the following:

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, a trail consisting of water and overland routes totaling approximately 290 miles extending from Tangier Island, Virginia, through southern Maryland, the District of Columbia, and northern Virginia in the Chesapeake Bay, Patuxent River, Potomac River and north to the Patapsco River and Baltimore, Maryland.”.

On pgs. 3-4, strike subparagraph (F) and insert new subparagraph (F) as follows:

“(F) INTERPRETATION AND ASSISTANCE.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary of the Interior, through Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, may provide to State and local governments and nonprofit organizations interpretive programs and services, and technical assistance for use in carrying out preservation and development of, and education relating to the War of 1812 along, the trail.”.